

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper dealt with entrepreneurship education as a tool for national development and sustainability in Nigeria using primary data. The study used survey research design and questionnaire was the instrument used for the study. The total population of 295 final year students in government owned tertiary institutions where vocational/technical educations are being taught in Enugu metropolis were used through random sampling. The findings revealed that the competency factors required for the students of vocational/technical education in tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis are among others, leadership skills, decision making skills, ability to organize small scale enterprises. The facilities available for teaching/learning of vocational/technical education showed that machines in good conditions and classrooms with seats and instructors table are highly available. Information communication technologies tools for teaching/learning, workbenches in laboratories and counseling sections are lowly available. Inadequate teaching/learning methods and approaches, classrooms/laboratories, funding, inability to use Information communication technologies materials among others are some of the challenges encountered by the students and these had effect on the national development. The study concluded that functional facilities needed for effective teaching /learning will help the students to assimilate and have practical knowledge of the study, and recommended among others that education with practical experience is required to reduce unemployment in the society and enhance national development and sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship Education, Empowerment, Competencies, National Development and Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education is important in human development. The essential skills required by youths and adults for improvement of health, employment and productivity in the nation could be gathered through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship is highly talked about in the society by not only individuals but also societal organizations. Entrepreneurship is seen as a viable strategy for developing economic growth of the country as well as providing supportive measures for meeting trends in globalization (Ndum, and Okey, 2013). It is seen as a source of wealth creation.

Pazarask (2006) avers that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth. This shows that entrepreneurship advocates nation's economic growth, competitiveness and innovation. Thus courses in entrepreneurship are taught in our colleges and universities, thereby making student's interest to be kindled in learning the skills involved in self establishment upon graduation (Msheliza, 2012). Since automatic employment is no longer

guaranteed for Nigerian graduates, especially in the public sector the need arises for acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by the students. Job creation is highly competitive and limited, hence making job opportunities highly difficult for students on graduation. Therefore, this study is to find out how entrepreneurship education could be a tool for national development and sustainability in Nigeria.

Vocational Education

According to Nwobasi, (2008) vocational education is defined as “training and retraining” which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control and is conducted as part of a programme designed to prepare individuals for gainful employment as semi-skilled or skilled workers, technicians or sub-professionals in recognized occupation and in new and emerging occupation, or to prepare individuals for enrolment in advance technical education programmes. Technical education is seen as a functional form of education, training or retraining designed to prepare individuals to enter, or continue in paid employment in any recognized occupation and in new and emerging occupations, or a part of total experiences of a person whereby he/she learns successfully to carry on a gainful occupation or employment (Okoro, 2012).

National policy on Education (2004) defined vocational and technical education as those aspects of the educational process involving education as well as the study of technologies and sciences with acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. It is education for practical work. Any type of education that has to do with the development of skills, attitudes, as well as knowledge necessary for self-reliance or gainful employment, is vocational and technical education.

The objectives of vocational education in the National policy on education (2004) are noted as follows:

- To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce
- To provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, industry, commercial and economic development.
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- To give an introductory professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
- To enable the youth have intelligent understanding of the increased complexity of technology.

The objectives avers that the students should acquire the necessary entrepreneurial competencies in vocational/technical education before graduation. the implementation of these objectives in schools will in no little way contribute to job creation, self-reliant, wealth creation, and empowerment of any students that acquired the knowledge and not the certificate. These factors will enhance national development, as there will be reduction in hunger and poverty, along with good health. There will also reduction in dependency on the government for white collar jobs which rarely exists.

National Development and Sustainability

National development means contribution from all the citizens towards improvement of the standard of the living in Nigeria. Sustainable development can be achieved by inculcating dynamic education through entrepreneurial skills in the educational system. Skill acquisition from technical/vocational education could bring about attitudinal and value

changes, political transformation and economic growth. Sustainability is upholding sustainable development of today, tomorrow and of the future. Entrepreneurial skills enhance empowerment for the youths which will be continuously handed down from one generation to the next for development to be continuous in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges facing the citizens of Nigeria range from high level of poverty, hunger, unemployment, over dependency on foreign goods and technologies, low socio-economic growth. The inclusion of entrepreneurship education through vocational and technical education for poverty reduction could enhance national development. This calls for proper strategies to implement entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum, for proper development of the students upon graduation.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective is to determine how entrepreneurship education enhances national development and sustainability. While the specific objectives are

- To identify entrepreneurship competencies required of students of vocational/technical education in tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis.
- To identify vocational/technical education effects of the students on national development.
- To determine the availability of facilities for teaching/learning of vocational/technical education in the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis.
- To ascertain the challenges in acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for national development by the students in the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis.

Research Questions

- What are the entrepreneurship competencies required for the students of vocational/technical education in tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis?
- What are the vocational/technical education effects of the students on national development?
- What are the facilities available for teaching/learning of vocational/technical education in the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis?
- What are the challenges in acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for national development by the students in the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis?

Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is survey. Institute of Management and Technology and Enugu State University of Science and Technology were purposefully selected among the tertiary institutions in Enugu Metropolis. This is because they are the only government owned tertiary institution where vocational/technical educations are being taught in Enugu metropolis. The population of the study consists of 65 and 130 final year of 2012/2013 academic session in the above institutions respectively; making the total population of 295 that were all studied using random sampling.

The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The four research questions were answered in the study using mean(X) and standard deviation (SD) to determine the closeness or otherwise of the opinions of the respondents from the mean. The items in research questions one and two of the instrument were structured on the four-point likert scale using response options of very much required (VMR) 4, much required (MR) 3, required (R) 2, and not required (NR) 1. Research question 3 was structured on a 4-point scale using highly available (HA) 4, moderately available (MA) 3, low available (LA) 2 and not available (NA) 1, while research question 4 was structured on 4 point likert scale of strongly agreed (SA) 4, Agreed (A) 3, Disagreed (D) 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1. A mean score of 2.50 and above for positive response and 2.49 and below as negative response were set.

The instrument was validated by three experts in the vocational /technical education of the institutions. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha formula and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants. The 295 questionnaires were given out while 293 were returned. This gives ninety-nine percent return rates.

Results

The results gathered from the respondents are shown in the tables below in accordance to the research questions.

Table 1: The Mean and the Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Entrepreneurship Competencies Required for the Students of Vocational/Technical Education in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu Metropolis

S/N	Competency Factors	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
1	Leadership skills	3.62	0.81	Moderately Required
2	Human relation skills	3.55	0.83	Required
3	Acquire decision making skills	3.63	0.72	Very Moderately Required
4	Ability to cope with challenges	3.52	0.71	Required
5	Ability to organize small scale enterprises	3.50	0.62	Required
6	Ability to bear risks	3.60	0.55	Moderately Required
7	Acquire skills of raising capital	2.39	0.89	Not Required
8	Acquire management skills	2.70	0.82	Moderately Required
9	Ability to forecast and budget for a new project	3.62	0.61	Moderately Required
10	Ability to draw organizational objectives	3.56	0.62	Required

Source: (author's field work, 2013)

The above table shows that nine competency factors are required since their mean are above 2.50, while one factor is below 2.50. The Standard Deviation ranges from 0.55 to 0.89 indicating that the responses were close together. This implies that all the entrepreneurship competencies except one were required of the students of vocational/technical education in tertiary schools in Enugu metropolis.

Table 2: The Vocational/Technical Education Effects of the Students on National Development

S/N	Vocational/Technical Effects	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
1	Skills in business	3.70	0.040	Much Required
2	Skills in agriculture	3.50	0.60	Required
3	Skills in manipulation of tools	3.42	0.50	Required
4	Ability to fabricate tools	3.30	0.80	Required
5	Ability to engage in production process and management	3.20	0.62	Required
6	Ability to start and accomplish a project	3.21	0.71	Required
7	Skills in craftsmanship	3.40	0.70	Required
8	Ability to focus on society's need before initiating a product	2.20	0.52	Not Required
9	Ability to handle woodworks	3.53	0.61	Moderately Required
10	Practical skills in using tools	3.67	0.50	Moderately Required

Source: (author's field work, 2013)

Table 2 shows that the 9 technical effects have mean values above 2.50 while 1 have mean value of 2.20 which is below the accepted mean, therefore not required. The skill in business education has the highest mean of 3.70, and is regarded as very much required. There SD ranges from 0.40 to 0.70 showing closeness of the responses in the group.

Table 3: The Facilities Available for Teaching/Learning of Vocational/Technical Education in the Tertiary Institutions in Enugu Metropolis

S/N	Teaching/Learning Facilities	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
1	Machines in good conditions	3.70	0.71	Highly Available
2	ICTs tools for Teaching /learning	2.60	0.53	Low Availability
3	Work benches in Laboratories	2.20	0.62	Low Availability
4	Toilet facilities	3.01	0.70	Averagely Available
5	Libraries	3.32	0.72	Averagely Available
6	Classrooms with seats and instructor's table	3.60	0.71	Highly Available
7	Tools and equipment for teaching & learning	3.02	0.80	Highly Available
8	Drawing tools	3.10	0.82	Averagely Available
9	Counseling Sections	2.30	0.61	Low Availability
10	Recreational facilities	2.40	0.52	Low Availability

Source: (author's field work, 2013)

Table 3 shows that three facilities were highly available, while three others were averagely available and four facilities had their mean scores below 2.50, so rated as low availability.

**Table 4: The Challenges in Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills for National Development
by the Students in the Tertiary Institutions in Enugu Metropolis**

S/N	Challenges	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
1	Inadequate teaching/learning methods and approaches	3.66	0.58	Strongly Agreed
2	Inadequate classroom/laboratories	3.70	0.40	Strongly Agreed
3	Inadequate funding	3.50	0.40	Strongly Agreed
4	Lack of awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education	3.65	0.45	Agreed
5	Inability to use ICTs materials in teaching /learning	3.45	0.41	Agreed
6	Unqualified Instructors	3.60	0.41	Strongly Agreed
7	Inappropriate curriculum content	3.72	0.51	Strongly Agreed
8	Inadequate Funding	3.65	0.46	Strongly Agreed
9	Epileptic power supply	3.42	0.47	Agreed
10	Poor motivations of the teachers	3.53	0.48	Agreed

Source, (author's field work, 2013)

Table 4 shows that all the challenges are required for the effective acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for national development by the students in the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis. There mean ranges from 3.42 to 3.70 which were above the selected value of 2.50. Also, the SD ranges from 0.40 to 0.58 showing that the opinions of the respondents were close.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings show that competency factors required for the students of vocational/technical education in tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis are among others, leadership skills, decision making skills, ability to organize small scale enterprises. These findings were in line with other studies by Nwokolo and Aboho, (2013), and Egbe (2008) in the study on Entrepreneurship skills required for sustainable layer production in developing the objectives planning for sources of inputs, and choosing systems and location of the enterprise.

The result also shows that vocational/technical effects on the students for national development shows the skills in business, ability to fabricate tools, skills in craftsmanship, ability to handle woodworks among others are required for the students to have their effects on national development upon graduation. This is in line with the study of Nwokolo (2010), in the training skills relevant for the employment in metal work industries.

The findings from the facilities available for teaching/learning of vocational/technical education show that machines in good conditions and classrooms with seats and instructors table are highly available. It shows that ICTs tools for teaching/learning, workbenches in laboratories and counseling sections are lowly available. This is in accordance with the studies of Iheje *et. al.* (2010) and Okafor, (2011) on the quality assurance of input into the implementation of agricultural education programmes in colleges of education in South east Nigeria. They discovered that availability and suitability of materials/ inputs were very low.

However, the findings on the challenges in acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for national development by the students show that inadequate teaching/learning methods and approaches, classrooms/laboratories, funding, inability to use ICTs materials among others are some of the challenges encountered by the students. This is also in line with the findings in other studies by Ukonze and Olaitan (2010), Nwokolo and Aboho, (2013), who found out that inadequate material for teaching practical, inadequate laboratories, contributes to lack of expectations from the society on the students of

vocational/technical institutions. It equally revealed that inappropriate curriculum and lack of awareness of entrepreneurship education are part of the challenges affecting the students in skill acquisition.

CONCLUSIONS

Functional facilities needed for effective teaching /learning will help the students to assimilate and have practical knowledge of the study. This will enhance self employment, wealth creation and sustainable development of the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Education with practical experience is required to reduce unemployment in the society.
- Awareness creation through media is highly required for the society to understand the importance of entrepreneurship education for national development.
- Government should look inwards for other alternative sources of power supply to the society since it is of great importance for skill acquisition.
- Qualified instructors in the field should be engaged for effective transfer of knowledge to the students.
- The educational curriculum should be made to adapt to the need of the society for the graduates of vocational /technical education to come out with experience and not with certificates alone.

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